

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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FOL LONDON 2722 SENT ACTION SECSTATE FEB 16, 1978 REPEATED TO
YOU QUOTE

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DEPT PASS TO WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM ATTN WILLIAM
DELLER, DOMESTIC POLICY STAFF, AND TO DEPT OF TRANS

PORTATION, ATTN DEPSEC ALAN BUTCHMAN

E. O. 01#52 N/A

TAG : EWWT, PORG, IMCO

SUBJECT: SUMMARIZED RESULTS OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON TANKER SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION,
FEBRUARY 1978

I. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED ON REQUEST OF
DOMESTIC POLICY STAFF, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT. INFORMATION IS DELIBERATELY BROADER THAN
MINIMUM REQUESTED TO ENABLE RESPONSES TO
PRESS ENQUIRIES, SHOULD THEY ARISE.

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II. SUMMARIZED RESULTS

1.; SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN STANDARDS OF SAFETY ON
OIL TANKERS AND THE PREVENTION OF POLLUTION FROM SHIP
HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE
8,534-GOVERNMENTAL MARITIME CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION
(IMCO); THE UNITED NATIONS MARITIME AGENCY; THE
CONFERENCE, WHICH CONCLUDED IN LONDON ON FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 17, WAS CONVENED IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT
CARTER'S INITIATIVE ON OIL POLLUTION ANNOUNCED IN A

MESSAGE TO CONGRESS ON MARCH 17, 1977. THE US DELEGATION TO THE CONFERENCE WAS HEADED BY DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ALAN BUTCHMAN AND INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE US CONGRESS, STATE, COAST GUARD, EPA, CEQ, NOAA, MARAD, INDUSTRY, LABOR AND NON

GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.

2. THE CONFERENCE WAS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING US-PROPOSED GOALS. IT MODIFIED THE 1973 MARINE POLLUTION CONVENTION AND THE 1974 SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA CONVENTION AND ADOPTED TARGET DATES, JUNE 1981 AND JUNE 1979 RESPECTIVELY, FOR ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE NEW TREATIES (CALLED "PROTOCOL 5");

3.; MOST OF THE PRESIDENT'S MARCH 17 INITIATIVES WERE ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE. IN FACT, THEY WERE EXCEEDED FOR NEW VESSELS, WHICH WILL BE FITTED WITH CRUDE OIL WASHING (COW) IN ADDITION TO PROTECTIVELY-LOCATED SEGREGATED BALLAST TANKS (SBT). THE ONLY DEVIATION FROM US PROPOSALS FOR NEW TANKERS WAS EXEMPTION OF SMALL PRODUCT CARRIERS FROM AN SBT REQUIREMENT AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBSTITUTION OF SBT WITH PROTECTIVE LOCATION FOR PROPOSED MANDATORY DOUBLE BOTTOM CONSTRUCTION.

4. THE US PROPOSALS WERE IN LARGE MEASURE ADOPTED FOR EXISTING VESSELS AS WELL. SINCE COW AND SBT WERE CONSIDERED EQUIVALENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, THE ALTERNATIVE REQUIREMENT OF COW IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. THE CONFERENCE ADOPTED SOME TONNAGE LIMITATIONS FOR EXISTING VESSELS LESS INCLUSIVE THAN US PROPOSALS, DUE TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES IN RETROFITTING CERTAIN SMALLER VESSELS;

5. AS PROPOSED BY THE US, ALL OIL TANKERS ABOVE 20,000 DEADWEIGHT TONS WILL HAVE IMPROVED EMERGENCY STEERING GEAR AND A SECOND RADAR. SPECIFICATIONS FOR COLLISION AVOIDANCE AIDS WILL BE DEVELOPED BY IMCO ON AN URGENT BASIS AND WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY A FUTURE AMENDMENT TO THE SAFETY CONVENTION.

6. THE CONFERENCE ALSO ADOPTED GREATLY IMPROVED INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES, A MAJOR STEP TOWARD THE ELIMINATION OF SUB-STANDARD SHIPS.

7. AS THE US REQUESTED, THE IMCO CONFERENCE ON TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF SEAFARERS WILL BE HELD IN JUNE, AHEAD OF ITS PREVIOUS SCHEDULE. THIS CONFERENCE IS EXPECTED TO ADOPT SIGNIFICANTLY UPGRADED REQUIREMENTS

AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR SHIPS' CREWS. THIS WILL AID IN REDUCING HUMAN ERROR WHICH ALL TOO OFTEN RESULTS IN DAMAGE TO SHIPS AND ACCIDENTAL POLLUTION.

8. THE US COAST GUARD WILL CONTINUE ITS STRICT PROGRAM OF BOARDING FOREIGN TANKERS ENTERING US PORTS TO ENSURE / THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH ALL RELEVANT US SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION REQUIREMENTS.

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9. THE TWO PROTOCOLS AND THEIR PARENT CONVENTIONS CONSTITUTE MAJOR AND COMPREHENSIVE EFFORTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION MEASURES.

III. FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

1. Q. WE HAVE NOTED REPORTS THAT AN INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN LONDON HAS BEEN CONSIDERING PROBLEMS RELATED TO OIL TANKERS SUCH AS OCCURRED LAST WINTER; THE ARGO MERCHANT, FOR EXAMPLE. DO YOU THINK SUCH A MEETING CAN PRODUCE RESULTS WHICH WILL PROTECT US WATERS AND PORTS FROM POLLUTION AND SAFETY HAZARDS?

A. LAST MARCH, IN A MESSAGE TO CONGRESS, I IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF ACTIONS WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN TO COPE WITH THE RISKS REPRESENTED BY OIL TANKERS. I DIRECTED THAT OUR EFFORTS BEGIN IMMEDIATELY TO IMPROVE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, BOTH TO ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF TANKER OPERATIONS AND TO REDUCE POLLUTION FROM THESE SHIPS. MY CONCERN WAS TWOFOLD: PROTECTION OF US WATERS AND PORTS AND REDUCTION OF WORLDWIDE POLLUTION OF THE OCEANS. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH CONCLUDED ITS WORK YESTERDAY IN LONDON WAS CONVENED SPECIFICALLY IN RESPONSE TO US INITIATIVES WHICH THIS ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED. THE INITIAL REPORTS FROM THE US DELEGATION TO THE CONFERENCE INDICATE THAT VERY POSITIVE RESULTS WERE ACHIEVED.

2. Q. HOW DO THE RESULTS COMPARE WITH YOUR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS?

A. THE CONFERENCE RESPONDED VERY WELL TO THE US PROPOSALS AND ADOPTED MANY OF THEM WITH LITTLE CHANGE.

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I HAD INDICATED THAT ALTERNATIVES TO OUR PROPOSALS COULD BE ACCEPTED IF THEY AFFORDED THE SAME DEGREE OF

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SAFETY. THIS WAS DONE IN SEVERAL INSTANCES. IN SOME RESPECTS THE STANDARDS DO NOT COVER THE FULL RANGE OF TANKER SIZES WHICH WE HAD PROPOSED, BUT IN THESE CASES WE BELIEVE THAT THE STRICT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM BY THE COAST GUARD, WHICH HAS BEEN IN FORCE FOR OVER A YEAR, WILL GIVE US THE PROTECTION WE NEED.

3. Q. IF CRUDE OIL WASHING WASN'T INCLUDED IN YOUR MARCH 27 INITIATIVES, WHY WAS IT ADOPTED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SBT FOR EXISTING SHIPS?

A. THE MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE CONFERENCE CONSIDERED COW TO BE AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SBT. THE US SUPPORTED AND ACHIEVED ADOPTION OF COW AS AN ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR NEW CARRIERS. FOR EXISTING CARRIERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, COW WAS ADOPTED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SBT. THE MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES URGED, AND WE WERE SATISFIED, THAT COW PROVIDES AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SBT FOR EXISTING SHIPS, WHERE IT IS MORE COST EFFECTIVE. THE ACCEPTANCE OF COW AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SBT FOR EXISTING SHIPS IS THEREFORE CONSISTENT WITH MY INITIATIVES, WHICH SUGGESTED SPECIFIC MEASURES BUT ALSO SANCTIONED ANY OTHER EQUIVALENT MEASURES.

4. Q. HOW WILL THE NEW SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION MEASURES HELP REDUCE POLLUTION?

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADOPTED STANDARDS IS AIMED AT REDUCING BOTH OPERATIONAL AND ACCIDENTAL POLLUTION. PRESENTLY SOME OIL AND OILY RESIDUES ARE ROUTINELY DISCHARGED INTO THE SEA DURING NORMAL CARGO OPERATIONS. ACCIDENTAL SPILLAGE, ON THE OTHER HAND, OCCURS ALL TOO FREQUENTLY AS A RESULT OF GROUNDINGS, RAMMINGS AND COLLISIONS. THE ADOPTED STANDARDS WILL SIGNIFICANTLY
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IMPROVE THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF SHIPS IN ORDER TO PREVENT OIL SPILLAGE DURING ACCIDENTS. IN ADDITION, THE STANDARDS ESTABLISH WORKING PROCEDURES TO MINIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF OIL WHICH MAY BE DISCHARGED INTO THE SEA DURING OPERATIONS.

5. Q. WHY ARE NEW AND EXISTING VESSELS TREATED DIFFERENTLY?

A. THE NEW STANDARDS WILL UNQUESTIONABLY INCREASE TANKER CONSTRUCTION COSTS. THIS INCREASE IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE OCEANS. WHILE COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED EFFICIENTLY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SHIPS, IT IS TECHNICALLY DIFFICULT TO RETROFIT EXISTING SHIPS. IN ORDER TO PROMOTE COST EFFECTIVENESS AND TO

KEEP ENOUGH SHIPS IN SERVICE TO SERVE THE MARKET, EXISTING VESSELS ARE GIVEN SOME TIME IN WHICH TO MEET SOMEWHAT LESS RIGOROUS, FINANCIALLY ACHIEVABLE REQUIREMENTS.

6. Q. WHEN WILL THESE NEW MEASURES GO INTO EFFECT IN THE US?

A. THE CONFERENCE HAS JUST ENDED AND OUR DELEGATION IS ON ITS WAY HOME. WE WILL TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE NEW TREATIES AND DECIDE IN THE NEAR FUTURE HOW AND WHEN TO IMPLEMENT THEIR REQUIREMENTS FOR US FLAG VESSELS AND FOREIGN FLAG VESSELS ENTERING OUR PORTS. IN MY MESSAGE TO CONGRESS I STATED THAT I WANTED NEW RULES TO BE FULLY EFFECTIVE WITHIN FIVE YEARS. WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SOME THINGS SOONER, OF COURSE, BUT CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT CHANGES TO EXISTING SHIPS TAKE LONGER.

7. Q. WHEN WILL THESE NEW MEASURES GO INTO EFFECT INTERNATIONALLY?

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A. THE NEW STANDARDS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY OTHER COUNTRIES WHEN THE TREATIES ENTER INTO FORCE, PERHAPS BY SOME EARLIER. FOR THE SAFETY TREATY, THE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDED A TARGET DATE OF JUNE 1979. FOR THE POLLUTION PREVENTION TREATY, THE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDED A TARGET DATE OF JUNE 1981. THE CONFERENCE FURTHER RECOMMENDED THAT COUNTRIES IMPLEMENT THESE STANDARDS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, WITHOUT AWAITING ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE TREATIES. WE BELIEVE THAT COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE THE URGENCY OF THE SAFETY AND POLLUTION PROBLEMS AND WILL ACT QUICKLY TO RATIFY THE TREATIES AND IMPLEMENT THE NEW STANDARDS.

8. Q. WHAT OTHER ACTIONS WILL THE US TAKE TO INCREASE SAFETY AND PREVENT POLLUTION OF THE OCEANS?

A. WE ARE PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE LONDON CONFERENCE IN ADOPTING SIGNIFICANT SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION MEASURES. YET WE ARE NOT COMPLACENT. NOW THAT WE HAVE ADDRESSED SHIP REQUIREMENTS, WE NEXT INTEND TO IMPROVE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF SHIP CREWS. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF SEAFARERS IN JUNE IS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT EFFORT TO UPGRADE SAFETY AND PREVENT POLLUTION. THE US WILL VERY ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE.

IV. SOME SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW AND EXISTING SHIPS

1. AS PROPOSED BY THE PRESIDENT, ALL NEW CRUDE OIL TANKERS OF 20,000 DWT OR MORE WILL BE FITTED WITH PROTECTIVELY-LOCATED SEGREGATED BALLAST TANKS (SBT), AN

EQUIVALENT TO DOUBLE BOTTOMS. THIS CONSTRUCTION WILL GREATLY REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF ACCIDENTAL OIL SPILLAGE CAUSED BY GROUNDINGS, RAMMINGS OR COLLISIONS. INERT GAS SYSTEMS WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF FIRE OR EXPLOSION DURING OPERATIONAL CARGO TANK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WASHING, NORMAL CARGO HANDLING, OR ACCIDENTAL COLLISION. IN ADDITION TO THESE US PROPOSED MEASURES, THE CONFERENCE FURTHER AGREED TO REQUIRE CRUDE OIL WASHING (COW) SYSTEMS. BY REDUCING OIL RESIDUE AND SLUDGE BUILD-UP IN CARGO TANKS, COW SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES THE POTENTIAL FOR OPERATIONAL OIL DISCHARGE INTO THE SEA.

2. ALL NEW OIL PRODUCT CARRIERS OF 30,000 DWT OR MORE WILL BE FITTED WITH PROTECTIVELY-LOCATED SBT. SUCH CARRIERS OF 20,000 DWT OR MORE WILL BE FITTED WITH INERT GAS SYSTEMS.

3. FOR TWO YEARS AFTER THE TREATIES ENTER INTO FORCE, EXISTING CRUDE CARRIERS OF 40,000 DWT OR MORE WILL BE FITTED WITH EITHER SBT, COW, OR CLEAN BALLAST TANKS. COW WILL BE PERMITTED AS AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SBT ONLY IF OPERATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH DETAILED SPECIFICATIONS (DESIGN, OPERATION, AND CONTROL) DEVELOPE BY THE CONFERENCE. CLEAN BALLAST TANKS, THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE, ARE CARGO TANKS DEDICATED EXCLUSIVELY TO CLEAN BALLAST.

4. TWO YEARS AFTER THE PROTOCOLS ENTER INTO FORCE, ALL EXISTING CRUDE CARRIERS OF 70,000 DWT OR MORE MUST BE FITTED WITH EITHER SBT OR COW ONLY, AND AN INERT GAS SYSTEM. FOUR YEARS AFTER ENTRY INTO FORCE, ALL SUCH CARRIERS OF 40,000 DWT OR MORE MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH SBT OR COW, AND THOSE OF 20,000 DWT OR MORE WITH AN INERT GAS SYSTEM.

5. FOLLOWING A SIMILAR TONNAGE PATTERN, SBT OR CLEAN BALLAST TANKS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR EXISTING PRODUCT CARRIERS. INERT GAS SYSTEMS WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEPENDING UPON SHIP'S TONNAGE, WITH THE PRACTICALITY OF RETROFIT CONSIDERED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS IN THE LOWER TONNAGE RANGE. INERT GAS SYSTEMS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR SHIPS LARGER THAN 20,000 DWT REGARDLESS OF VESSEL SIZE IF HIGH CAPACITY TANK WASHING MACHINES ARE INSTALLED.

6. RADAR REQUIREMENTS, STEERING GEAR IMPROVEMENTS AND
IMPROVED WORLDWIDE INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDU
PROCEDURES WILL ALSO BE IMPLEMENTED RAPIDLY ALONG WITH
COLLISION AVOIDANCE ASSIST DEVICES TO FOLLOW.

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